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Message Text

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50
ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 PA-04

RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-03 AID-20 OMB-01 NIC-01

DRC-01 COME-00 EB-12 LAB-06 SIL-01 /098 W
---------- 117050
R 031304Z OCT 74
FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5960

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EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, JM
SUBJECT: SHEARER STEPS DOWN AS JLP LEADER

1. OPPOSITION LEADER HUGH SHEARE ANNOUNCED OCTOBER 1 THAT HE WILL RELINQUISH HIS POST AS JLP PARTY LEADER AT THE END OF HIS CURRENT TERM INNOVEMBER. SHEARER CITED THE PHYSICAL BURDEN OF LEADING BOTH THE JLP AND THE BUSTAMANTE INDUSTRIAL TRADE UNION (BITU) AS THE REASON FOR HIS DECISION TO STEP DOWN. HE MADE IT CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT HE WAS NOT QUITTING POLITICS AND WOULD RETAIN HIS SEAT IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

2. LEADING CANDIDATES TO SUCCEED SHEARER AT JLP CONGRESS SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER 23 INCLUDE FORMER FINANCE MINISTER EDWARD SEAGA AND SENATOR IAN RAMSAY. THERE ALSO SPECULATION THAT ROBERT LIGHTBOURNE, WHO LEFT JLP TO FORM UNITED PARTY AFTER 1972 GENERAL ELECTION, MIGHT NOW COME BACK INTO JLP FOLD

3. AMBASSADOR AND EMBOFFS HAD LUNCH WITH SHEARER AND SEAGA JUST BEFORE ANNOUNCEMENT AT HOME OF WEALTHY JLP SUPPORTER JOHN ISSA. SEAGA, WHO SPOKE VERY MUCH LIKE THE EMERGING NEW JLP LEADER, SAID
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THE PARTY IS GIVING TOP PRIORITY TO THE STRENGTHENING

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OF ITS COUNTRYWIDE ORGANIZATION IN PREPARATION FOR
A GENERAL ELECTION IT EXPECTS TO BE CALLED NEXT
SPRING. WHILE SEAGA CONCENTRATES ON PARTY ORGANI-
ZATION, SHEARER WILL PRESS FOR WORKING CLASS
INTERESTS AND SOCIAL BENEFITS THROUGH THE BITU OF
WHICH HE IS VICE PRESIDENT. JLP SEES INFLATION AS
KEY ISSUE AND WILL ATTACK PNP ON HANDLING OF ECONOMY

4. COMMENT: JLP HAS BEEN SPLIT BY FACTIONALISM
AND TURNED IN VERY WEAK PERFORMANCE AS OPPOSITION
PARTY UNDER SHEARER'S LEADERSHIP. BY BOWING OUT
NOW HE CAN CONCETRATE ON STRENGTHENING HIS POWER
BASE IN BITU, AND OPEN WAY FOR JLP FACTIONS TO
RESOLVE DIFFERENCES AND SETTLE ON LEADER THEY CAN
ALL SUPPORT. SEAGA LOOKS VERY MUCH LIKE THAT MAN.
IF ANYONE CAN WHIP JLP BACK INTO FIGHTING TRIM IT
IS SEAGA. FACT THAT HE IS A RICH WHITE MAN IN A
POOR BLACK COUNTRY, HOWEVER, IS MAJOR OBSTACLE TO
HIS ELECTION TO FORMAL PARTY LEADER ROLE. GERARD

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